

Dumont Dunes TRT
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 20, 2009

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
Conference Room
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
(760) 252-6000

1. Call to Order

TRT Chairman Bill Presch called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and led the TRT in a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Introductions

Members of the TRT, participating BLM staff, and members of the general public introduced themselves:

TRT Members Present:

Dr. William Presch, chairman; California Desert District Advisory Council
Jim Bramham, vice chairman; OHV organizations (via speakerphone)
Randy Banis, secretary; other motorized recreation
Terry Allen, Nevada OHV interests (via speakerphone)
David Charlton, botanical science
John Dagleish, Friends of Dumont Dunes
Sheri Davis, commercial filming
Gerry Hillier, San Bernardino County
Kathleen Stosuy, California OHV interests
Ed Waldheim, California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission

BLM Staff Present:

Roxie Trost, Manager, Barstow Field Office
Lynnette Elser, Recreation Chief, Barstow Field Office
Mickey Quillman, Resources Chief, Barstow Field Office
Mike Trost, Maintenance, Barstow Field Office
Don Maruska, consultant, California State Office

TRT Members Absent:

Ron Schiller, California Desert District Advisory Council

Guests:

Mike Woods
Ron Santos

B. Agenda

Bill Presch opened the agenda to additions and changes. The agenda was approved by consent. Ed Waldheim requested a discussions regarding OHV grants and financial reports, and Kathy Stosuy requested a discussion about boundary signing.

C. Minutes

Copies of the draft minutes of the TRT's September 6, 2008, meeting were circulated to TRT members earlier via email. Randy Banis noted a minor correction to the attendance list. Bill Presch moved, and John Dalglish seconded, that the minutes be approved as corrected. The motion was approved by consent.

2. Old Business

A. Operations Center Update

Mike Trost reported that the operations center is nearly completed with only electric and lighting to be done. Bill Presch described his visit to the site three weeks earlier and complimented the office on improved signing and a redesigned flow for traffic. Terry Allen agreed but noted a dust problem in the checkpoint area between watering. Ed Waldheim asked for an update on the Dumont Dunes road condition and Mike Trost reported that a grader was borrowed from NPS during the holidays which smoothed much of the washboards. Ed issued concerns that the Barstow Field Office's grader remained down due to the need to repairs since summer. Roxie Trost responded that the repair work was put out to bid. Terry Allen felt that the road was in good condition especially given the remoteness of its location.

Users asked for clarification on funding for the new operations center, to which Lynnette responded that funds were from federal appropriations and not user fees.

Ed Waldheim inquired if additional crushed asphalt had been obtained, but Mike Trost reported that Cal Trans has not yet awarded the material to anyone. After hearing of use of the helipad by a private helicopter, Randy Banis requested and received clarification that the helipad was for official use only. Mike Trost also replied that the helipad will be painted with warning information but is researching the official wording that needs to be used.

Bill Presch directed that the next item be discussed out of order on the agenda to better facilitate participants' schedules.

3. New Business

A. BLM Advisory Groups

Consultant Don Maruska, under contract with the BLM California State Office, guided the TRT in a discussion on its role via-a-vis the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Don presented recommendations focusing on restructuring and better integrating TRT's with the Desert Advisory Council (DAC).

The TRT discussed the kind of expertise that might be helpful within the body and concluded it would start with the current assignments plus: biological/natural history/science; local community representation; an emphasis on actual Dumont Dunes users.

The TRT discussed the terms of office and suggested it retain the current three-year terms, with an option for reappointment, which coincides with the terms of DAC members. The TRT also recommended the group have an odd number of members between 7 and 13, with at least one who is also a member of the DAC.

The TRT decided it would retain its schedule of at least 4 meetings per year, with one on a Saturday for increased public participation. Electronic sessions are also allowable as long as the public is noticed with materials and the opportunity for participation.

The TRT also discussed a process for reporting to the DAC, in that minutes or a report would be provided to the chair of the DAC and distributed with a 14-day comment period before forwarding to the BLM.

The TRT decided it would continue having three elected officers: chair, vice chair, and secretary.

Finally, the TRT's mission statement was reviewed and revised:

“Review and advise about proposed broad budget categories and amounts to provide confidence about the sources and uses of funds in the recreation area;

Discussion and recommendations concerning potential infrastructure projects and significant operational changes;

Review of seasonal activities and identification of key issues, concerns, and potential approaches to address them.”

Randy Banis moved to adopt all of the above recommendations. Ed Waldheim seconded the motion, which passed without objection.

Bill Presch returned discussions to Old Business.

1. Old Business

B. Budget Update

Lynnette Elser explained that complete financial information is not yet available due to the continuing “blackout” caused by the current computer system conversion. She reported nearly \$400,000 in total sales before the Martin Luther King Day holiday weekend, significantly lower than in 2007/08.

Lynnette reported that the current five pass types have been difficult to administer, and that very few non-holiday annual passes have been sold at all. Roxie Trost asked the TRT to consider simplifying and consolidating the fee structure for the future. Kathy Stosuy suggested offering a discount for offsite purchases, but guests reported that offsite passes are often out of stock. Randy Banis complimented Lynnette Elser for doubling the list of offsite vendors since the last TRT meeting.

C. Boundary Signing

Kathy Stosuy commented on the color and lack of noticeability of the brown carsonite boundary signs and inquired if they could be of a different color. Roxie Trost replied that the signing colors are set by a formal signing policy. She suggested increasing the number of signs and placing them closer together, on which the TRT concurred.

D. OHV Grants

Ed Waldheim reported that the Governor is proposing to borrow \$90 million from the OHV trust fund in order to help meet the state's deficit. Discussion ensued about upcoming grant projects and the TRT recommended a boundary fencing project, and a project for additional educational materials, such as the United Desert Gateway newspaper distributed at the Imperial Dunes.

Terry Allen asked if the regular brochures were still being distributed, to which Roxie Trost replied that they were, but only to those purchasing passes. Those being waived through with annual passes already are not stopped for a brochure.

Terry also inquired if the more aggressive law enforcement actions now in place at Imperial Dunes would be seen at Dumont Dunes. Roxie replied that it would not because such problems have not arisen at Dumont, and that visitors are more family oriented than at Imperial.

E. Fringe-toe Lizard

Bill Presch reported that his study is finding lizards to be fairly numerous. His first draft of the study is in progress with a final expected in June. All data has been forwarded to the USF&WS for use in processing the listing petition, and the BLM Barstow Office has assembled a habitat conservation plan and circulated it for review.

F. Financial Reporting

Ed Waldheim asked for better financial reporting. Randy Banis agreed and clarified that the need was for a more standardized format that can be easily compared over time. Randy also suggested a method that would involve less calculations and sources, perhaps one that could be generated from one source database. Roxie Trost explained that the financial system conversion project currently taking place is expected to help with this by providing improved reporting capabilities.

4. Public Comments

Guests inquired how vendor fees are calculated. Lynnette responded that they are set by federal policy and not by the local field office. They are currently \$35 per day or 4% of receipts, and that vendors must also purchase a pass if they wish to recreate while there.

Guest asked when the new BLM buggies would be put in to use. Roxie Trost responded that there has been only one training session offered for her office's employees, and that the newly donated buggy was currently being retrofitted for emergency extractions. Currently, there is only one driver trained to operate the buggies.

5. Next Meeting

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting: Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 10:00 AM, BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room.

6. Adjournment

Randy Banis moved, and Ed Waldheim seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. By consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Banis
Secretary, Dumont Dunes Technical Review Team

Approved on May 5, 2009

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

BLM Advisory Groups

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